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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB AND DRL/AE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [MD](#)

SUBJECT: New Opposition Party Alleges High Levels of Intimidation

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: The National Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM), established in January, has accused the ruling Party of Communists of harassment, and the Christian Democrats and Democratic Party of false charges of corruption and member-buying. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Sniping began not long after the PLDM was registered on January 25, 2008. In March, Democratic Party (PD) leader Dumitru Diacov (whose party Filat deserted last year) and Christian Democrat (PPCD) leader Iurie Rosca accused Filat of bribing other parties' members to join PLDM. On March 28, Rosca accused Filat of corruption, fraud and mismanagement while director of the Privatization Department between 1998 and 1999, and urged the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) and the Center for Combating Economic Crimes and Corruption (CCECC) to launch an investigation. On April 2, two corruption cases were opened against Filat; the PLDM was also charged with document fraud that day. President Voronin has regularly described Filat as the "creature" of Valeriu Pasat, former Security and Information Service (SIS) director and former Minister of Defense.

¶3. (SBU) In a May 23 conversation with us, Filat stated that more than 1,000 party members had been interviewed by low-level employees of the PGO, after authorities had taken their names and addresses from party registration documents. According to Filat, party members were asked whether they had received money to join the party, why they had left their previous parties, and what they discussed at PLDM meetings. PLDM members of local councils were questioned about the party's financial sources. No charges were made, but, according to Filat, the interviews were a form of intimidation, a violation of citizens' freedom of association, and part of a larger campaign to discourage opposition parties before March 2009 parliamentary elections.

¶4. (SBU) Under Moldovan law, financial or other inducements to join a party are not illegal. Police are allowed to question citizens in relation to a case, and are within their rights to extract names from a party-founders' petition, and present those names to the PGO, which issues subpoenas for questioning. Filat claims that low-level PGO officials are not qualified to do the questioning. Citizens who are questioned have the right to remain silent and have a lawyer present during the interview. Only if a citizen is named as a suspect or a witness can he or she appeal to the courts, but interviewees have the right to protest abuse committed by officials during questioning. In short, the GOM appears to be using legal fact-finding powers to frighten members of a particular political party.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Politics in Moldova can be a rough game, and local and international election observers have regularly noted the ruling party's intimidation of voters and misuse of administrative resources. Anxiety in the Party of Communists about its fall in vote share since 2005 may increase such activities. However, the

fact that these charges are widely reported in the media shows that Moldova is making progress in opening such matters to public debate.  
End comment.

Kirby